



CA DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION
STATE
SPECIAL SCHOOLS

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Braille Bites

California School for the Blind

VOLUME 7, EDITION 1

NOVEMBER 2015

Superintendent's Message

Welcome to the first edition of *Braille Bites* for the 2015-2016 school year. As you read through our newsletter, it is evident that our students are engaged in stimulating academic programs and exciting recreational activities. It is an understatement to say, that our students are busy! This year **CSB** initiated two new programs: The Modified High School Program, a collaborative effort between **CSB** and Newark Unified School District, and **CSB**'s Bridge Program, a collaboration between the residential program and the transition program that offers students opportunities to advance their living skills and prepare for adult living environments.

Many programs that **CSB** offered in the past, but were curtailed because of budget shortfalls, are back. Students are participating in yoga and martial arts in the dorm program. The APE program has acquired a stand up paddle board, and students are experiencing new forms of physical activities in our pool. Our Short Course Program will be offering a variety of innovative one-week classes for students with visual impairments throughout the state.

This issue features **CSB**'s participation in White Cane Day in Fremont and in Sacramento. Both events were a huge success. **CSB**'s Walk/Stroll-a-Thon raised \$6400 for **California School for the Blind Education Foundation** and for **California School for the Blind Parents and Friends Organization**. Our students were amazing walker, runners, and strollers. It was an all-school event with much enthusiasm and

By: Sharon Sacks



fun. Thanks to our many families and friends who contributed to this effort. A special thanks to the O&M staff who planned and executed both events.

CSB is pleased to inform you about our efforts to engage in accreditation. Gina Ouellette's article on WASC Accreditation will outline the steps **CSB** will undertake to secure initial accreditation. It is an enormous undertaking, but needed to ensure continuous school improvement.

Finally, I wish to welcome three new staff members to our **CSB** community: Linda Eck, Joe Vona, and Stacey Colley. They are amazing professionals who bring a wealth of knowledge and skills to our school.

On behalf of **CSB**, its students and staff, we hope you enjoy *Braille Bites*. Also, we wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

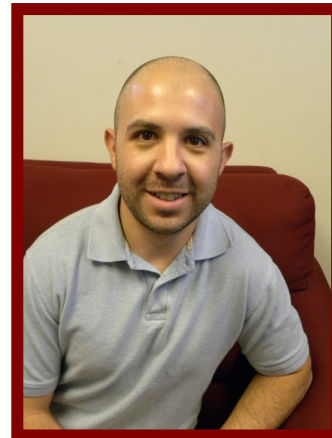
Look Who's New!!!!



Linda Eck
Teacher



Stacey Colley
O&M Specialist



Joe Vona
AT Specialist

CSB HAS A NEW HIGH SCHOOL MAINSTREAM OPPORTUNITY!!

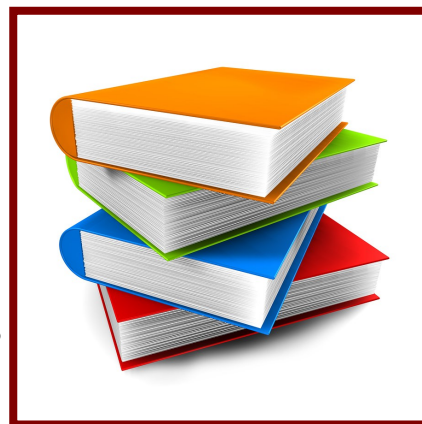
By: Maureen Reardon

For many years, **CSB**'s students have had to opportunity to attend Kennedy High School in the Fremont Unified School District. Now, we have another path to a diploma available to high school age students! Four freshmen, and one junior student, are enrolled at Newark Memorial and **CSB** for the 2015-2016 school year.

Our superintendent, Sharon Sacks, has arranged a new program with the Newark Unified School District, at Newark Memorial High School. Unlike Kennedy, Newark offers a full year system of classes, rather than one semester/one year block classes. Additionally, students are enrolled in smaller resource room and special day classes, allowing for a modified pace of instruction.

We are excited for our students in this new program, because it is yet another way for **CSB** students to obtain a high school diploma in a mainstream setting. Currently, high school diploma paths are available through Kennedy High School, the Hadley Correspondence School for the Blind, the California High School Proficiency Exam (CHSPE), the General Equivalency Degree (GED), and now, through Newark Memorial High School.

CSB is grateful to Newark Memorial High School for the unique opportunity this program provides to **CSB** students! We have come to admire the spirit at Newark Memorial, as an inclusive community of learners and educators.



Google Education

By: The Assistive Technology Team

CSB is now using Google Education as another tool to empower students and bring them into the 21st century. On October 30, 2015, the assistive technology team dressed as NinjATurtles, presented to the staff an overview of Google Education. With the Google Suite, all teachers and students will have the opportunity to participate in an online classroom environment for communication and assignments. It also allows students to share and collaborate their documents and projects with each other and with their teachers.

Perhaps one of the greatest benefits is that students can now access their school work even at home (they just need an internet connection) and across various devices- whether that be their phone/tablet or computer. We believe that Google Education will better prepare **CSB** students for the future after they leave **CSB** as the apps are the same as the stand-alone Google apps available to the public.

We demonstrated and overviewed some of the applications and will be working with teachers in small group training sessions in the next few weeks. Students are beginning to learn how to use Google Education during the tech classes in the lab. We hope that teachers and students can enhance their knowledge and abilities to navigate all the cool features in the Google Suite.

Cowabunga, dude!



Pictured left to right: Veronica Gunn, Yurika Vu, Adrian Amandi, Stephanie Herlich and Joe Vona

A zoo visit

By: Carrie Frost

The students of Ms. Smith's class: Natalie C., Jayna N., Manny O., and Athena S. had an amazing hands-on experience at Oakland Zoo in October. Four students, accompanied by Susan Smith, Katie Smith, and Carrie Frost, enjoyed learning fascinating animal facts as well as participating in a "behind the scenes" tour of the zoo. The zoo docent, Carol Wiegel, began the experience with some time listening to and identifying birds at the zoo. Each student felt and picked a flower eaten by humming birds. The students visited pot belly pigs and learned that they are one of most intelligent domestic animals. They also felt a model of the largest pig recorded and posed for a class photo. Students had the opportunity to pet a real tortoise. They learned the difference between a tortoise and a turtle. A tortoise has claws to dig a burrow and a turtle has fins so that it can swim.



The students next went to visit the zoo commissary, where the meals are prepared for each zoo animal every morning. Students were able to see, touch, and smell animal meals before they were taken away for mealtime. There was a cart full of colorful fruits, vegetables, and raw meat. The class even got to touch some frozen food, including rabbits, baby mice, and chicks. Students learned what a meal for an animal should consist of by listening to the menus for the various animals. Animals at the zoo are never fed live food. Frozen food (including meat) is thawed out before it is taken to animals. In the wild, most animals eat food when it is fresh because it does not have bacteria. Food at the zoo must be stored and frozen so that the food is safe for animals to eat. Students also learned that at the zoo, food is spread to encourage animals to "hunt" to search for their food to mimic how animals would live in the wild. It also encourages the animals to exercise.

Afterwards, students went back to the education building to have a small group session with live animals, including a gopher snake, an amazon parrot, a ferret, and an African millipede. Each student was able to touch these animals and

A zoo visit (continued)

learn their adaptations for their specific environments. Next, the students went to individual tables to feel zoo artifacts, such as bones, feathers, snake skins, a giant tortoise shell, and more. Ms. Wiegel made sure each student's questions were answered and moved between the tables to discuss each artifact with individual students. The zoo trip was concluded with a picnic lunch outdoors in beautiful weather.

Much thanks to the Oakland Zoo for putting together a fantastic program that was both entertaining and educational for our **CSB** students. Ask Ms. Smith's students about their experience!



2015 Summer Technology and Sports Academy

By: Adrian Amandi

Over the last two weeks of June, 26 students throughout California came together at the California School for the Blind to celebrate themselves, their visual impairment, and their independence. Staff from **CSB** hosted students for two summer camps focusing on technology and sports. Students learned how to use computers and iOS devices to utilize screen access software to engage with word processors, the internet, games, and more. Students learned how to navigate the net and even how to code a webpage. Students learned to roller-skate, play goal ball, rock climb, and so much more.

Technology and Sports Academies are offered each June to students throughout the state who are able to stay in our dormitories and access our curriculum. The minimum requirement is basic keyboarding and an enthusiasm for learning.

Please keep in touch with our website and contact James Rudder at 510.794.3800 or jrudder@csb-cde.ca.gov for more information.

Accreditation at CSB

By: Gina Ouellette

The **C**alifornia **S**chool for the **B**lind is pleased to announce that we are currently in the process of seeking WASC Accreditation! Read on to find out more about what this means.

What is WASC?

WASC refers to the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC, or WASC for short). WASC is one of six regional accrediting agencies in the United States.

What is Accreditation?

Simply put, Accreditation is a voluntary process schools can go through in order to provide assurance to families, the educational community, the general public, and other organizations and agencies that the school is a trustworthy educational institution which is focused on student learning. The WASC Accreditation process will result in a specific School Improvement Plan which will be monitored by both **CSB** staff and WASC staff. The focus of WASC Accreditation is always on continuous school improvement. In other words, this is not a process that is done once every few years. Rather, the school is required to continually monitor its progress, implement changes, and refine the school-wide action plan.

WASC has several different categories of accreditation in order to accommodate different types of school programs. **CSB** is applying for accreditation under the Supplementary Education Program category.

What is the process for Accreditation?

The first step in the process is to complete and submit an ACS WASC Affiliation Request, along with a nominal application fee. **CSB** has already completed this step.

The second step is to complete and submit the Initial Visit Program Description Report. This is a comprehensive document which includes a number of components, including staffing information; school organization; policies and procedures; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student supports and services; and a comprehensive plan for the future. The final piece of the Program Description Report will consist of a specific list of three major achievements/accomplishments (made within the past three years) as well as major program needs.

Accreditation at CSB (Continued)

After the Initial Visit Program Description Report is submitted, an on-site, one- to two-day Initial Visit will be completed by an independent team from WASC. After the Initial Visit, the WASC team will provide **CSB** with an assessment report which will include a list of specific recommendations.

Once **CSB** has been granted accreditation status, **CSB** will complete a full self-study report and implement the agreed-upon School Improvement Plan, submitting progress reports to WASC on a regular basis and undergoing additional site visits.

Adapted Physical Education News

By: Mary Alice Ross

The Adapted Physical Education program has been in full swing since early September. There are many new students both in the Transition program and in the Education program.

Some of the students have shared with the staff that they have never played beep base ball or goal ball. Many have never experienced the equipment in the Fitness Center and kayaking in the pool is also new to them.

Spin bikes, elliptical, rowing machines, treadmills and weight lifting equipment are all available in the Fitness Center. The new students seem excited to workout with this equipment, and learn proper technique.

We have set up a peer teaching program, so that the new students are learning skills from the students who have learned and trained on this equipment for years.

Currently, the Transition students are enjoying hiking at some of the local East Bay Regional parks. When the rain begins, we head to the bowling lanes. Several of the hikes are grueling and we refer to one of the more difficult hikes up a steep incline as “cardiac hill”. The students learn different outdoor education skills as well as different terrains in the parks.

The younger students in the Education program are learning and improving their swim skills. In addition, they are enjoying sitting in a kayak in the pool, learning the forward, backward and spin strokes. Kayaking is new to many students. It is a great way to learn basic strokes in the pool prior to going out on a lake. This past spring, many students learned how to (SUP) Stand Up Paddle board in the pool. It was very challenging but the students did great!

All classes work on California Physical Education content standards appropriate for their age and grade level.



White Cane Day

By: Stacey Colley



CSB celebrated National White Cane Day in numerous ways this year. On Wednesday October 14th, **CSB** staff and students traveled to Lake Elizabeth for a Walk-Stroll-A-Thon after spending the morning on campus participating in a Low Vision Quest and Art Extravaganza. The following day, select students and staff brought the celebration to California Department of Education in Sacramento. In the theater students participated in a Low Vision Quest where they looked over technology and various pieces of

equipment from vendors including Eschenbach, Access Ingenuity, HIMS, Humanware, and Sterling Adaptives. The sales representatives proudly demonstrated their latest in electronic magnifiers/CCTVS, and braille displays. Students were encouraged to learn about what was available in their preferred medium by touching, listening, and asking questions. Many students were wowed by the sleek, portable and collapsible features of the newer electronic magnifiers. The OCR (optical character recognition), text to speech capability was also a hit with many of our middle and high school students. With technology ever changing, our students were eager to get their hands on what is available to them now. Thanks to Than's planning, the theater oozed with a sense of excitement, curiosity, and comfort as **CSB** students and staff discovered new low vision devices and how the devices can assist them.

While students were finishing up with the Low Vision Quest, they went to the gym for an Art Extravaganza with Minda. The gym was bustling as **CSB** students enthusiastically engaged in the morning art activities. Students drew with scented markers and embellished their drawings with stickers. They played and sculpted with Model Magic, a soft, very pliable- and non-messy, modeling material. Some were surprised that it could stretch and even bounce! Students experimented with making tactile drawings with a tracing wheel. They also enjoyed creating collages from torn paper, ripping the paper with their hands was an enjoyable and new experience for some. Students glued their paper pieces to make wonderful, abstract collages.



White Cane Day (Continued)

After having lunch in the quad, students and staff traveled to Lake Elizabeth for a stretching warm-up with Sue and Mary Alice. Participants walked, ran, or rolled a 0.5 mile loop in the park stationed with cheering staff, water, and benches for breaks. Many staff and students reported they completed the loop not once but five or six times! All student and staff participation was greatly appreciated; it was a huge success because of you! This event raised \$6,400.00 through pledges, way to go **CSB**!



On the following day, students met with Jonn Paris Salb and Andrew Laufer in Sacramento at California Department of Education. After lunch, students (Gabby, Donte, Chase, Billy, Teresa, and Carlos) set up display tables with the help of staff (Sharon, Adrian, Kylie, Katie, and Stacey). Donte and Gabby sold Edge Art, Lucky Touch cookies, and dog biscuits at one table while Billy and Teresa brailled names of individuals who attended the event. Carlos and Chase were stationed outside to teach participants how to use a cane under blindfold while traveling through an obstacle course. Lastly, Minda sent boxes of student artwork, including ceramics and collages, to be displayed which everyone really enjoyed!

White Cane Day is always a great day for celebration, and **CSB** did just that!

JOBS (Job Opportunities for Blind Students) Program

By: Karen Courtemanche

When you visit **CSB** please remember to stop by the award winning Rocket Shop Café which is a staff snack bar run by our Transition students. The café serves both cold and hot drink selections along with a variety of food items. Students learn basic customer service skills, money handling and how to stock and inventory a small business. The Rocketshop Food Preparation Program supplies the Rocketshop with fresh baked pizza and bread and produces a variety of lunches and snacks including soups and panini.

Next door to the Rocket Shop is The Closet, the new on-campus thrift store. The Closet is staffed by our Transition students and accepts donations of clothing, shoes, jewelry, electronics and household items for resale to all of our students and staff. Students also learn basic customer service and money handling skills along with laundry and display skills. Come by and take a peek at our fabulous selection of gently used items!

Other components of the JOBS program include an inside and outside gardening program which provides some ingredients for food preparation, recycling, shredding, school announcements and general office support.

CSB's Bridge Program

By: Ann Linville

CSB is excited to announce our newest program, The Bridge Program, a joint venture between our residential program and the transition program. The Bridge Program is for students who are 18 years and older who wish to gain independence in a supported environment as they prepare for life post **CSB**, and for some students, a stepping stone into the apartment living program.

With the support of our daily living skills transition teacher Nanako and 4 residential counselors, 2 morning Debby P. and John H. and 2 evening counselors Jenny H. and Bob S., 4 male students and 5 female students have the opportunity to cook a healthy breakfast and a healthy dinner 1 time per week. In addition to cooking, students learn to research menus, prepare shopping list, and purchase food under the guidance of our wonderful counselors. Food preparation is not the only emphasis, students will have the opportunity to refine their laundry skills, cleaning skills, and budgeting skills as they move towards adulthood.

In addition to the day to day chores and household responsibilities, the students will have the opportunity to research, plan, and participate in recreational activities. We hope to expand their experiences and give the students the opportunity to join the students in the apartment living program in after school activities.



This is only the beginning, we look forward to offering students the opportunity to flourish and become independent young men and women.

Halloween Dance

By: Charles Udeze

On Thursday, October 29th, 2015 the Westridge Dormitory staff hosted an all school wide Halloween Dance Party and Costume Contest at **CSB**. The event was well attended by both the Day students as well as the residential students. The school gym and the Rec Center were fully decorated for the dance and to simulate a haunted house. Our students expressed having great fun; Special prizes were awarded to the best, most scary and weirdest costumes, even the school's Superintendent also dressed in her cheetah costume. We had special Halloween dinner and a wide spread of drinks and refreshments to grace the occasion. All students that participated also received a souvenir cup filled with assorted Halloween candy. Thanks to Parents and Friends for funding this fun dance.



Yoga

By: Tamera Watson

The **C**alifornia **S**chool for the **B**lind Residential Program has been hosting sessions developed by instructor Nancy Yates. The classes are held on Tuesdays from 6 pm to 7 pm. Ms. Yates has been instructing the **CSB** students in the recreation/gym area.

This is a program Nancy Yates has developed specifically for **CSB** students. **CSB** students have attended her yoga program in San Francisco for the past three years in limited numbers. She has come to **CSB** this fall to open the program to all **CSB** students. Class attendance has been high, usually between 25 and 30 students in attendance each week.

The students that participate in yoga learn stretching, balancing, flexibility and strengthening postures that open the lungs, neck, shoulders, arms, and hips.

The class centers on breathing for the students and helping them release stress. One **CSB** student that attended yoga for two years stated that it “helped clear his mind” and he used what he’d learned during the day in stressful situations.

Yoga gives the students a chance to relax and distress from their studies. It has improved their balance, flexibility and spatial relationships in their everyday lives. Let’s not forget, they enjoy it!



Karate and wrestling program

By: Anthony Daniels

The **C**alifornia **S**chool for the **B**lind Karate/Wrestling and anti-violence program is off to a great start. The students meet in the **CSB** gym every Thursday night drilling steps to conflict resolution, karate techniques as well as wrestling skills. All students of **CSB** are welcome in the program.



The goals of the conflict resolution program is to train our students to resolve conflicts and also teach the skills to other students. We are very excited to work with the **CSB** psychology department.

The wrestling program is headed up by veteran wrestler Elena H. who is working hard to rebuild the program.

The self-defense program continues to be strong with students training in physical skills and mental skills that will help them to be safe.

CSB is proud to announce the return of the Short Course Program in 2016!

Short courses are an opportunity for students throughout the state to engage with each other and **CSB** students while learning skills essential to the core and expanded core curriculum. While we do not have a designated short course teacher, we do have a team of staff volunteers that have put together five short courses that will be offered in 2016. More information about these courses as well as the application to all five courses is available at http://www.csb-cde.ca.gov/csb_shortcourses.html.

Survivor: Urban – Wild Adventures	
January 25-29, 2016	<i>Ages 14 and up</i>

Careers Short Course	
February 22-26, 2016	<i>Ages 18-22</i>

Succeeding in Middle School: You, Your Eyes, and Your Education	
March 14-18, 2016	<i>Ages 10-14</i>

The Ultimate Google Experience	
April 4-6, 2016 (Southern California)	<i>Ages 12-18</i>
April 18-22, 2016	<i>Ages 12-18</i>

Animals, Animals, Animals!	
May 9-13, 2016	<i>Ages 16-18</i>

If you have further questions after visiting our website please reach out to James Rudder at 510.794.3800 x329 or jrudder@csb-cde.ca.gov.

CSB Apartment Living Program Students are Hard at Work!

By: Jim Blackshear

Anybody living in the Bay Area knows that housing costs are out of control. **CSB** Students understand that finding meaningful employment is an important piece of the housing puzzle, and that finding and keeping a job will be necessary if they want to become independent once they transition to the next chapter of their lives. This has inspired **CSB**'s Transition Program to add more of a vocational component to the Apartment Living Program, and the students have accepted the challenge.

Cody M. and Jason B. have been working as stock and customer service clerks at Walgreens in Fremont since the beginning of last school year. Cody recently began an additional job at Dogs for Diabetics where he grooms dogs that are being trained to become diabetic alert dogs. These special dogs alert diabetic handlers in advance of low (hypoglycemia) or high (hyperglycemia) blood sugar events before they become dangerous. Tierra B and Austin W. have been working for City of Fremont's Parks & Recreation department as "Snack Shack" food handlers at the concession stand at Fremont Central Park's softball fields.



Brittany B. has been working closely with Marcus Graves at the front desk in **CSB**'s administration building where she is receiving rave reviews for her work as a front desk and telephone receptionist. Carlos T. who is new to the Apartment Living Program, has been working at Tri City Food Bank where he packages donated food items.

WHAT'S COMING UP AT CSB?

November: 23rd - 27th - Thanksgiving Break

December: 9th - Winter Concert Matinee 1:30 pm

10th - Winter Concert 7:30 pm

21st - January 1st - Winter Break

January: 18th - Martin Luther King Jr Holiday

29th - Early Dismissal



California School for the Blind
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